

The Museum of Modern Art

11 West 53 Street, New York, N.Y. 10019 Tel. 956-6100 Cable: Modernart

NO. 66
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact:
Luisa Kreisberg (212) 956-2648

PORTRAITS OF ARTISTS AND WRITERS AT THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

A portrait gallery of the greatest names in the artistic and literary worlds of the 20th century will be on view in the third-floor Sachs Galleries of The Museum of Modern Art through September 24. ARTISTS AND WRITERS, directed by William S. Lieberman, who heads the Museum's Department of Drawings and recently directed the exhibitions A TREASURY OF MODERN DRAWING: THE JOAN AND LESTER AVNET COLLECTION and MEXICAN ART, features 90 drawings (all from the Museum's Collection) depicting such masters of modern culture as Marcel Duchamp, Henri Matisse, Max Jacob, Willem de Kooning, Bertolt Brecht, James Joyce, Jean Arp, Frank O'Hara, and John Dewey, among others.

Portraits of painters done by other artists include Max Beerbohm's drawing of John Singer Sargent, Hans Bellmer's pencil view of Jean Arp, David Parks' watercolor of Richard Diebenkorn, Hans Richter's portrait of his fellow Dadaist Raoul Hausmann, and James Wyeth's portrait of Andy Warhol. Sculptor Alberto Giacometti appears in a drawing by Tal Coat and architect Frederick Kiesler in one by René Bouche. The photographer Berenice Abbott is the subject of an extraordinary 1920 assemblage by the equally extraordinary Baroness Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven. As William Lieberman observes of this work, here "Dada appears at its handicraft worst, incorporating the then newest materials, cellophane and metal foil, as well as pebbles, scraps of metal, cloth and a single painted button."

The self-portrait is, of course, a favorite means of artistic expression, and ARTISTS AND WRITERS includes 22 of them. Among other artists representing themselves are Marc Chagall, Marsden Hartley, Orozco, Jules Pascin, Ben Shahn, and Charles Sheeler. Two late self-portraits by Matisse, both drawn in 1945, eloquently suggest, in William Lieberman's words, "the rhythmic possibilities

(more)

of drawing in outline. Without modeling, line alone describes contour." Among the seven views of Marcel Duchamp in the exhibition are two self-portraits, including his Monte Carlo Bond. This is a photo-collage, lithographed bond share issued by Duchamp in 1924 to finance a gambling trip to Monte Carlo. (Suffice it to say that Duchamp's system for beating the house didn't work.)

The depiction of writers by artists is a venerable tradition in the literary and artistic community. Included in the exhibition are Paul Cadmus' portraits of novelists Katherine Anne Porter and Glenway Wescott (the latter, also seen in works by Jean Cocteau and Pavel Tchelitchew), Dubuffet's portrait of Joë Bousquet, Juan Gris' drawing of Max Jacob, and Antonio Frasconi's portrait of Brecht. Also on view is a 1953 series by Larry Rivers that depicts the leading figures of what has since come to be known as "the New York School" of poets: John Ashbery, Edwin Denby, Frank O'Hara, and Kenneth Koch. Dada provocateur Tristan Tzara is seen in three works by Sonia Delaunay, including her 1923 portrait of him as a monocled dandy. The noted American philosopher John Dewey appears in a drawing done by Matisse at the suggestion of Albert C. Barnes, the great collector of Matisse's paintings. Barnes was a follower of Dewey's and an enthusiast of the latter's book Democracy and Education. Max Ernst's Loplop Introduces the Surrealists includes a pride of artists and writers of that revolutionary movement of the 1920s and 30s. And Gertrude Stein is here (as she was everywhere) in the one work in the exhibition that isn't a drawing: a bronze sculpture by Lipchitz.

In the exhibition, drawings by Bouche, Chagall and Duchamp are gifts of those artists to the Museum. Also several drawings have been given in honor of friends of the Museum. These memorials honor Anna S. Graff, René d'Harnoncourt, Myron Orlofsky, Frank Perls, Paul J. Sachs, Barbara Harrison Wescott, and Shirley Wolfe. Twenty-six of the drawings shown were acquired during the past year.

The Museum of Modern Art gratefully acknowledges the support of its exhibition program by the New York State Council on the Arts.